

DOCTRINAL AND CONTROVERSIAL.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

The Editors reserve the right to erase all improper personalities and objectionable expressions found in any article accepted for this department; and they alone shall be the judges.

The Resurrection a Necessity.

BY JOHN REIFF.

The Revelator says, "Death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead that were in them;" hence a time will come when death will hold men no longer; for "the dead, small and great," must "stand before God." We conclude that without a resurrection there will be no future life. Isaiah announced the death of Hzekiah in these words: "Thou shalt die and not live." Death obliterates life in the man as really as it does in the beast. "As the one dieth so dieth the other." Eccles. 3: 19. "He made a way to his anger; He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence. Ps. 78: 50. Death robs men of life; the resurrection restores it. The resurrection is a requisite to future consciousness; for in death there is no remembrance of thee. "His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish." The thinking powers will come to an end, when death strikes the blow; but the resurrection will restore consciousness again.

The resurrection is also necessary to future reward; for the Savior said, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus what advantageth it me if the dead rise not."—PAUL. All would be lost and he would utterly fail to reap a reward unless raised from the dead again; hence he had an insatiable longing to attain unto a resurrection from the dead—a resurrection unto a better life. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished, for Christ came into the world "that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have eternal life." Christ said, "He that believeth in me though he die, yet shall he live." "On such the second death hath no power." The last enemy shall forever be destroyed. What a strong consolation to the righteous, though they may have to yield to the cold embrace of the enemy and enter the realms of the dead! Yes, they shall live again, and as they cannot measure time while in that condition, there will be to them no long interval before they will awake and sing a song of everlasting deliverance.

Oh, what joy and rejoicing will then take place when the grand release from death shall be ushered in; when then the saints shall put on immortality and death is swallowed up in victory. The time of the promised restitution having now come, their inheritance will be fully prepared then. "The ransomed of Jehovah shall return; they shall come to Zion with triumph—everlasting gladness shall crown their heads. Joy and gladness shall they obtain; sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Evil Among the Good.

BY A. HOOVER.

God sowed good seed in paradise, but when it came to the harvest the principal product was tares. God had his sons before the flood, but more numerous were the children of the devil: and in all ages the plants of grace have ever found the weeds springing up by their sides, their stalks, leaves, and finites putting forth together. The church is not an exception, and never will be as long as the present dispensation lasts. Even in its first and purest periods, there was a Judas among its apostles, an Ananias among its first converts. As long as it continues in this world, Christ will have his Antichrist, and the house of God its men of sin. He who sets out to find a perfect church in which there are no unworthy elements, proposes to himself a hopeless search; Go where he will, worship where he may, in any country, in any age, he will soon find tares among the wheat, sin mixing in with holiness. Deceivers, hypocrites and unchristian men are in every assembly of saints. No preaching, however pure, no discipline however strict, no watchfulness however searching, can ever make it different. Paul told the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord should not come until there came a falling away first, and

an extraordinary manifestation of sin and guilt in the church itself, and assured them that apostasy was to live and work on until the Lord himself should come and destroy it by the manifestation of his own personal presence. The Savior himself has taught us that in the Gospel field, wheat and tares are to be found, that it is forbidden to pluck up the bad lest the good also be damaged, and that both are to grow together until the harvest, which is the winding up of the present order of things—the end of the world.

The Two Brands.

If you will allow me, I will tell you what happened to me the first morning after Fannie and I were married and began to keep house. We were not blessed with a great store of this world's goods, and had no servants. I rose early to make the fire, and raking open the ashes found just one brand alive.

"It won't burn alone," thought I, and I broke it in two, laid the parts together to produce a blaze, and soon there was a glowing fire. "Just so it will be with wife and me about religion," thought I. Wife was a whole-hearted Christian, a member of the church, but timid and retiring. I once thought I had a hope, but I never professed Christ, and the hope I once cherished was about dead. I didn't know whether I was a Christian or not. I couldn't eat my breakfast for thinking, and wife said,

"What ails you Richard? Isn't the breakfast cooked to suit you?"

"The cooking is all right," said I, "but I'll tell you what isn't. We didn't have family prayers last night or this morning. Now, if I never get into the kingdom I don't want to keep you out of the highest seat you can have. I found out this morning, kindling the fire that, one brand would not burn alone, so bring out that Bible, laid away so choice in the parlor, and keep it right here on the shelf. I'll read it aloud, morning and evening, and kneel down and hear you pray for yourself and me."

Wife came and put her arms around me and tried to coax me to do the praying, saying she was afraid she couldn't. I would not, and so she did, and we were both in tears before she got through. I could not stand out against those prayers. The Spirit came knocking, knocking at my heart's door, and I had to open it. When we knelt together I began at last to pray, first silently then aloud. Then I went to the prayer-meeting and asked Christians to pray for me; then I prayed for myself there, and soon after I confessed Christ before men by uniting with the church.

Wife and I have been trying ever since to serve God together. I don't see how I ever could have got on alone, and wife says she is sure she couldn't.

I thanked God ever since for sending his Spirit to set me thinking about the brands that morning when I made fire.

R. N., IN CHRISTAIN AT WORK.

Drifted In.

It was in the winter. A poor and aged widow was living alone, and when she awoke in the morning she found that she was completely snowed in. She happened to have no coal nor wood, for she was dependent upon exterior assistance, and when morning came tardily she remained in her miserable bed, expecting assistance. But none came. She was a religious woman, and, although suffering from cold, she did not despair of relief, even though the snow was drifting high around her.

For miles around the snow had rendered the roads quite impassable. But she did not despair. She began to pray and ere long she heard men coming to her assistance. It had occurred to some influential personage in the district, to send out his men to cut a way toward the cottage, and this had been the means of saving the poor woman's life. The poor woman had prayed in faith, and had been rescued.

"But would she not have been rescued in any case?" a doubter remarks. "Would not the men have come under any circumstances?" Perhaps so, for God's mercies are over all his works, and he has said, "Before they call I will answer them."

But perhaps not, for people often forget their neighbors in times of need. It is true we may not always receive what we ask for, but surely that is no proof that our requests are unheeded. A child is not always given what it thinks is best for it. But when a child asks a favor, believing that it will receive what it wants, if the parents approve of the mode and object of the petition, and the favor is granted, what loving child would have the impudence to turn around and say, "I shall thank no one for this, for I should have got it any way?"

—SEL.

Seeing with One Eye.

Among my friends and acquaintances there is a missionary of a city Mission and Tract Society, who is remarkable for his skill and tact in dealing with individual cases. At one time a Christian master of a large carpenter's shop, sought his services in behalf of his foreman.

"He is profane, a scoffer and a skeptic," he said. "I cannot do anything with him; and I cannot get along without him, he is such an excellent workman."

The missionary promised to see what he could do. Frequently he visited the shop, speaking to one and another of the journeymen, but sedulously avoiding the foreman, until his curiosity was thoroughly aroused. At last the opportunity waited for came. Seeing the foreman one day squinting along a board to see if the board was straight, the skill and tact of the missionary seized upon the occasion. Stepping up to the workmen he said, "Now is not that strange, that a man with two good eyes can see better with one?"

With a hearty laugh the foreman answered, "Well, I never thought of that, but it is true sometimes."

"Yes, it is true; and that reminds me of a verse in the Bible, 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.' I guess you had better think of that;" and the missionary left him.

However, the wedge was in, the workman's respect was won, and his mind set to thinking. As he said afterwards, he could never run his eye along a board without the words coming to mind, and an inquiry as to their meaning. Slowly and patiently the missionary followed up his advantage, until at last the heart yielded, and the scoffer became a humble but zealous follower of Christ. The last I heard of him, some years ago, he was a faithful steward in a church, and superintendent of the Sunday school.—L. W. MUDGE.

Signs of Spiritual Decline.

When you are averse to religious conversation or the company of heavenly-minded Christians. When from preference, and without necessity, you absent yourself from religious services. When you are more concerned about pacifying conscience than honoring Christ in performing duty. When you are more afraid of being counted over-strict than of dishonoring Christ. When you trifle with temptation or think lightly of sin. When the faults of others are more a matter of censorious conversation than of secret grief and prayer. When you are impatient and unforgiving towards the faults of others. When you confess, but do not forsake sin: and when you acknowledge, but still neglect duty. When your cheerfulness has more of the levity of the unregenerate than the holy joy of the children of God. When you shrink from self-examination. When the sorrows and cares of the world follow you further into the Lord's day than the savor and sanctity of the Lord's day follow you into the week. When you are easily prevailed upon to let your duty as a Christian yield to your worldly interest, or the opinions of your neighbors. When you associate with men of the world without solicitude of doing good, or having your own spiritual life injured.—SELECTED.

"Do the right deed, do it in faith, and in prayer commend it to the care of God. Though the waves of circumstance may soon waft it beyond your reach, they only carry it to the place prepared by Him. And whether on an earthly or a heavenly shore, the result will be found, and the reaper will rejoice that he was once a sower."